

OPERATIONS GROUP FILE

SECRET

S E C R E T 191249Z MAY 80 STAFF

CITE FBIS/LONDON 25780

TO: FBIS.

REF MY DISCUSSIONS WITH BBC:

1. RAE REMAINS POSITIVE [REDACTED] HE WILL GO TO PLANNING COMMISSIONS FOR BOTH PROSPECTIVE SITES; HIS FIRST CHOICE REMAINS [REDACTED] THAT IS WHY [REDACTED] WOULD LIKE CHART DEALING WITH "SITE A." HE FEELS CERTAIN, HOWEVER, THAT [REDACTED] WILL ATTRACT ATTENTION AND THAT THERE WILL BE QUESTIONS. IN THIS REGARD HE WILL CHECK WITH BBC OFFICIALS AND PROBABLY FCO TO MAKE SURE THAT HE IS IN POSITION TO ANSWER ANY EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS. HE FEELS CERTAIN, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WILL BE INQUIRIES FROM PRESS, AND HE WILL NOT FUDGE THE ISSUE. RAE HAS APPARENTLY ALL ALONG SEEN [REDACTED] AS BBC OPERATION; HE IS AGREEABLE TO [REDACTED] BEING HERE THROUGH SHAKEDOWN PERIOD BUT SEES IT AS BEING OPERATED BY [REDACTED] PEOPLE OVER THE LONG RUN. AN FBIS ENGINEER HANDLING IT FOR THE LONG RUN WOULD, HE FEELS, PROVOKE UNION TROUBLE.

2. RAE WILL MOVE AHEAD TO DEVELOP A PROJECTED CONTRACT [REDACTED] HE REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT ACCEPTING OUR FUNDS AND OPINES THAT WE MAY BE ENTERING ON "SLIPPERY SLOPE," BUT HE WILL DISCUSS IT WITH HIS SUPERIORS AT BBC AND PRESUMABLY WITH FCO. THERE IS A PRECEDENT: VOA LEASES A TRANSMITTER AT WOLVERTON FROM BBC AND REIMBURSES BBC ON MONTHLY BASIS. THUS BBC ACCOUNTANTS HAVE NO PROBLEM IN ACCEPTING OUR FUNDS. ONE WORRY IS WHETHER BBC WILL BE ABLE TO FIND THE MONITORS; I ENCOURAGED THEM TO INCLUDE MONEY FOR RECRUITING EFFORT. RAE IS CONVINCED HE WILL HAVE TO "ANNOUNCE" THIS PROJECT TO HIS EMPLOYEES; THIS MAY PRODUCE SOME CONCERNS BY LEFT-LEANING EMPLOYEES. RAE IS ALSO RUNNING LARGE DEFICIT ON PERSIAN COVERAGE AND WILL TRY TO INCLUDE SOME FARSI/PASHTO/DARI COSTS; I WAS NON-COMMITTAL. RAE HAS ONE OTHER CONCERN: HE IS WORRIED THAT IF U.S. GOVERNMENT CHANGES ITS MIND ON THIS EXTENSIVE SOUTH ASIAN COVERAGE HE WILL BE STUCK WITH

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NUMEROUS MONITORS WHICH, UNDER BRITISH LAW, CANNOT BE FIRED. I ASSURED HIM THAT MAJOR CHANGE IN OUR INTEREST IN SOUTH ASIA IS VERY UNLIKELY, AND ALTHOUGH WE CAN ONLY COMMIT FUNDS ON A YEARLY BASIS WE WOULD NOT LEAVE BBC IN THE LURCH ON THIS PROJECT.

3. RAE IS LIKELY TO LEAVE IN LATE JULY (OFFICIALLY END OF SEPTEMBER BUT HE HAS LEAVE TO TAKE). HIS BOSS HAS BEEN KEPT INFORMED OF ABOVE DEVELOPMENTS, BUT UNFORTUNATELY MANSELL HIMSELF IS RETIRING IN DECEMBER. I HAVE INFORMATION ON HIS REPLACEMENT AND WILL DESCRIBE THIS TO YOU ON MY RETURN. RAE PLANS TO WRAP UP [REDACTED] AGREEMENT BEFORE HE LEAVES. (THIS PARA SHOULD BE KEPT QUITE CONFIDENTIAL).

4. FCS HAS INFORMED RAE THAT HE CANNOT EXPAND THE MALAWI [REDACTED] HE IS NOW MULLING THE IDEA OF AN EXPANDED, OPEN OPERATION IN SALISBURY, A LA NAIROBI. HE WILL FEEL OUT HIS BOSSES ON THE IDEA OF A JOINT FBIS-BBC OPERATION IN SALISBURY, AS HE DOES NOT HAVE THE FUNDS FOR A PURELY BBC BUREAU.

5. RAE CONTINUES TO HOPE THAT NEXT BBC-FBIS MEETING WILL BE IN WASHINGTON. I TOLD HIM WE AGREED.

6. RVW 19 MAY 00; DRV D9C.6.
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